

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 4-18-07)

5,664

Shipments received since opening

47,385

Cubic meters of waste disposed

88,952

Containers disposed in the underground

WIPP radiologically



WIPP may have achieved what Superman and other superheroes couldn't – invisibility. Well, at least a type of invisibility. WIPP is just as visible to the human eye as it always has been, but one local scientist reports that despite eight years of operations, the project is radiologically invisible.

Request for public comment on DOE contractor employee pension and medical benefits challenge

The DOE is seeking public comments and/or recommendations on how to address the challenge it faces due to increasing costs and liabilities associated with contractor employee pension and medical benefits.

Under the Department's unique Management and Operating (M&O) and other site management contracts, DOE reimburses its contractors for allowable costs incurred in providing employee pension and medical benefits to current employees and retirees who are eligible to participate in the contractors' pension and medical benefit plans.

DOE has established a Web site for the public to [submit comments and/or recommendations](#).

Comments are due by close of business on Friday, May 11.

"From the perspective of radiological effects," says Jim Conca, director of the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring & Research Center (CEMRC), "we cannot see who works at WIPP, who lives near WIPP or that WIPP even exists."



Jim Conca, CEMRC Director
CEMRC photo

For nearly 10 years, CEMRC has been conducting environmental monitoring around WIPP and the community. Their studies have involved air, soil, water, plants and even people. In the years prior to WIPP's opening, their data was used to establish an environmental baseline of the area's background, or naturally occurring, radiation levels.

After opening, measurements could then be compared to the baseline to determine if WIPP was having any impact on area radiation levels. Based on CEMRC's findings, the answer is that WIPP has had no radiological impact.

"Although we are seeing nothing at WIPP," added Conca, "it's interesting to note what we *can* see."

In people, CEMRC's studies are able to see who smokes because of the uranium in phosphate fertilizers from tobacco. They are also able to identify people who breathe in a lot of dust, such as farmers or field workers.

The studies can even identify some of your leisure-time activities. For example, if you have visited the Ukraine for vacation they can see traces of cesium and strontium. And if you are into extreme sports, CEMRC can see increased levels of potassium-40 in your muscles.

CEMRC's environmental monitoring results at and around WIPP since 1998 are available on the organization's Web site at www.cemrc.org.

Oldest tornado photo



NOAA Photo Library

The above image is the oldest known photograph of a tornado. It was taken near Howard, S.D. on August 28, 1884. The name of the photographer is not known.

Great American Clean-Up Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event

A household hazardous waste collection event will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 21 at the Lake Carlsbad Recreation Area Beach parking lot.

By state and federal law, this event is open for residential service only. No commercial or business-generated wastes are permitted.

Some examples of acceptable wastes include batteries, oils, antifreeze, fluorescent light bulbs, tires and gasoline.

For more information, contact Richard Aguilar, the City of Carlsbad's environmental service manager, at 887-1191.

Tornado season begins in New Mexico

Tornado season has come early to New Mexico. Recently, a line of powerful thunderstorms produced several tornadoes in the eastern plains. How much do you know about tornadoes? Do you know what to do if one were approaching? The following information about tornadoes comes from the Federal Emergency Management Administration's Web site.



NOAA Photo Library

Tornadoes

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in seconds. A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Every state is at some risk from this hazard.

Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible.

Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still. A cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible. Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.

What to do before a tornado

Be alert to changing weather conditions.

- ⌘ Listen to [NOAA Weather Radio](#) or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.
- ⌘ Look for approaching storms
- ⌘ Look for the following danger signs:
 - ⊗ Dark, often greenish sky
 - ⊗ Large hail
 - ⊗ A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
 - ⊗ Loud roar, similar to a freight train.

Public comment period on GNEP extended

The DOE has extended the public comment period regarding the scope of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership's programmatic environmental impact statement to June 4.

Comments may be:

E-mailed

GNEP-PEIS@nuclear.energy.gov

Provided via phone toll-free

1- 866-645-7803

Faxed toll free

866-645-7807

Mailed

Mr. Timothy A. Frazier
Office of Nuclear Energy, U.S. DOE
1000 Independence Ave., SW,
Washington, D.C. 20585

More information is available on the
Web at www.gnep.energy.gov.

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

What to do during a tornado

If you are under a tornado WARNING, seek shelter immediately!

If you are inside, go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.

If you are inside a vehicle, trailer, or mobile home, get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.

If you are outside with no shelter, lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding. Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.

Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.

Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

Information submitted by Howard Brown, WTS Safety

WIPP Wise



Wildlife is abundant on and around the WIPP site. Recently a Horned Owl was spotted atop WIPP's air intake shaft as it surveyed the site below. The image was captured by WTS employee Al Boyd.



Harold McFarlane, president of the American Nuclear Society

American Nuclear Society president speaks in Carlsbad

The local American Nuclear Society (ANS) section recently sponsored a presentation by Dr. Harold McFarlane, the society's president. About 25 people attended. McFarlane provided an in-depth look at the current state and future of nuclear energy worldwide, as well as reasons to support its resurgence such as climate change and energy security.

He told the audience that ANS issued a statement backing the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP), which includes moving the U.S. to a closed fuel cycle, where spent nuclear fuel is recycled.

The local section supports the ANS position on GNEP. There is area interest in GNEP facilities, as evidenced by a site study underway in western Lea County.

"The Society's position is one of support for responsible global expansion of peaceful nuclear energy ... For expansion at the levels being considered, a nuclear fuel cycle that enhances energy security and sustainability while promoting nonproliferation must be created," the ANS statement reads. "Transitioning to GNEP ... will enhance resource utilization, radioactive waste management, and safeguards around the world."

McFarlane noted that in addition to completing the fuel cycle, other minimum conditions for a nuclear energy renaissance include creating a 21st century workforce and successful research, development and demonstration of advanced technologies.

ANS has been involved in advocating for increased nuclear education funding and expanded research programs.

McFarlane also pointed out the importance of public involvement.

He stressed the importance of being ethical and providing facts, adding that it's important to separate facts, opinions and speculation. He said supporters should remain enthusiastic.

The ANS Web site — www.ans.org — provides additional resources for discussions about nuclear energy.

McFarlane is deputy associate lab director for nuclear programs and director of the Space Nuclear System and Technology Division at Idaho National Laboratory. He holds a bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Texas, a Ph.D. in engineering science from the California Institute of Technology and an MBA from the University of Chicago.

ANS, established in 1954, is a non-profit membership organization with more than 10,500 members, including engineers, scientists, educators, and other nuclear professionals. For more information on the local ANS section, contact Candice Jierree (WTS) at 234-8325.

Submitted by Victoria Parker (LANL)

Interested in WIPP?

If you would like to be notified when TRU TeamWorks is updated with the latest information about WIPP, send an e-mail message to TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

April Birthdays!

Gary Strong (WTS)
April 1

Dorothy Thomas (NCI)
April 2

Tricia Rose (Triumph)
April 6

Charlie Riggs (CTAC)
April 9

Shari Cullum (WTS)
April 12

Lolly Espinoza (Triumph)
April 12

Phil Gregory (WTS)
April 19

Parking lot reconfigured for TRUPACT-II trailers

The west end of the WIPP site parking lot has been reconfigured to support TRUPACT-II trailer parking. The concrete parking bumpers have been removed and the area has been striped to accommodate the larger spaces needed for the trailers.

"The new configuration will aid in the parking and departure of empty shipments," says Leroy Bostick, Surface Operations and Maintenance manager. "We are asking personnel to avoid parking in the west end."

The parking area was reconfigured based on a suggestion from the Operations Safety Team. One of the members identified the change as a means to reduce congestion and avoid potential equipment damage.

Be aware of the changes and avoid parking in this area.

Also, remember that the speed limit in the parking lots at the site and at the Skeen-Whitlock Building is 10 miles per hour.

The U.S. Department of Energy
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Please send comments and/or
suggestions to: [TRU TeamWorks](#)

